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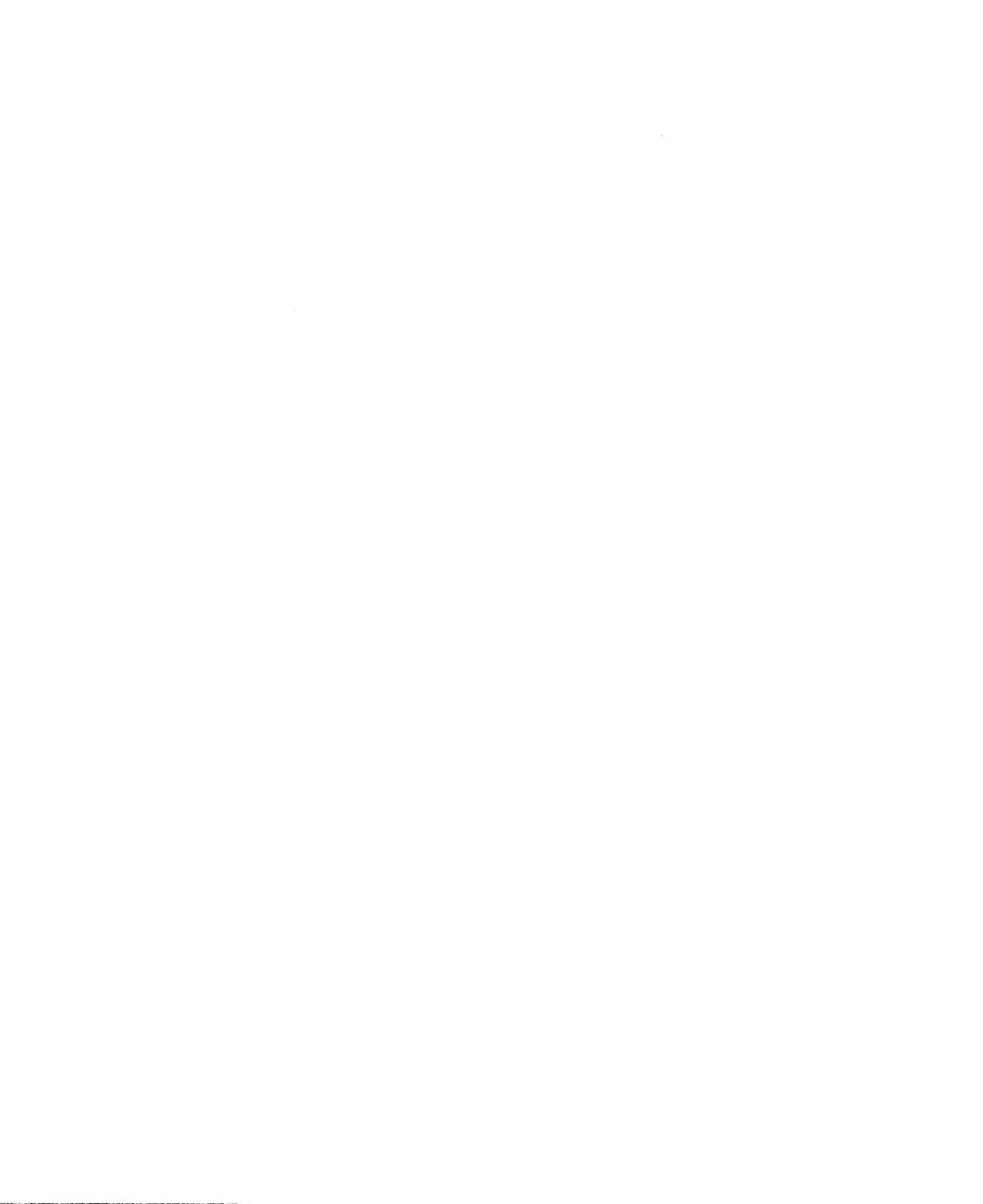
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The
Giritory

Annah Robinson Watson

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★ The Victory ★

By

Annah Robinson Watson,

Author of

"Some Notable Families of America."

"Passion Flowers."

"A Royal Lineage."

"On The Field of Honor."

"The Champion Maid."

Memphis, Tennessee,

★ 1909. ★

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TO

ELIZABETH LEE ROBINSON

The Balm of Gilead's in her gentle speech,
The inspiration of Supernal Love
In loyal soul,—and here the visions dwell
Which lift from Earth, to "things which are above."

Illustrations.

"The Blessed Damozel,"	Rossetti
"Saint Mary the Virgin,"	Ittenbach
"The Star,"	Piglheim
"Mater Dolorosa,"	Guido Reni
"Pieta,"	August Roth
"The Cherub Choir,"	Sir Joshua Reynolds
"First Easter Dawn,"	Thomson
"At The Tomb,"	Plockhorst



THE VICTORY.

WHEN CHAOS WAS.

A Centre: A Source: A Consciousness:
A Force with supereminent Purpose:
A Self-sufficient Cause,—Effective,—Changeless:
Without beginning, without ending,—
Before Whom was nothing,
Greater than Whom could nothing be;
Whose power, limitless, reached to low, to high,
To atom, to aggregation,—
Beneath Whose breath aspired
The protoplast to soul-stirred sentience.—
This was God, is God, the Creator;
This the Triune Lord Jehovah,
Who willed to work, and to speak
Into being all that was or may be,
Yesterday—To-day,—Forever.



THE VICTORY.

LUCIFER.

Earth was not, and Heaven was everywhere,—
Reaching through an aznre distance,
Far extending, where the silence
Oft was broken by the Seraphs
Winging, singing, in a rapture
Never shadowed nor diminished.

All surrounuding, all embracing,
Centre, Source, the Onnipresent
Ruled, informed, and comprehended;
And the harmony enfolding,
All pervading, had endured
Through the eons slow revolving
With no end and no beginning.

But there grew by smallest measnres
Scorn of rule, excess of passion,
Pride, ambition, till incited
By their Leader, some revolted.
Then was war in Highest Heaven;
Then was Lucifer, the Traitor,
Banished, and about him gathered
Mighty hosts of rathful rebels:



THE VICTORY.

These, with pinions linked, now winged them
 Into space, to farthest darkness,
To a place beyond the boundaries
 Of their yet remotest roamings.
Then the light grew less, the glory
 Faded, while with chilling breezes
Heavy clinging mists embraced them.—
 Where had been primeval silence
Came the rhythmic sweep of pinions,
 Where was blackness, trailing flashes
From the wings long steeped in radiance;
 Till all drunk with rapid reeling
Flight, they faltered as a chasm
 Yawning wide with fear, received them.—
Here abided now the Fallen,
 Here with Lucifer, their Leader.



THE VICTORY.

Once, he'd paused 'twixt Hell and Heaven,—
 Far adown, from amber spaces
Near the glorious golden Centre,
 Came a Seraph, calling, crying,
“Lucifer! Alas! Oh, Lucifer!
 Listen! Come! I wait thee, Lucifer!”—
Twas Amora, fair Amora,
 Who beside him oft had wandered
In the joyous past, the Uplands
 He had now in scorn deserted.—
Half repenting he had listened,
 Then to lowest depths descended.



THE VICTORY.

Here was Hell. He claimed dominion
Throughout all this lower kingdom,
Where the majesty of Evil
 He enthroned in lurid splendor:
And as sin grew with the sinning
 Spread the vile disease of Evil,
Spread contagion of low passions
 Till they writhed as slaves and minions
Who in bonds of love and blessing
 Had been free in blissful service.—
Now as spawn and brood of reptiles
 Cringing, hissing noxious vapors,
All in loathsomeness contending
 Swarmed the host, grown fierce and frenzied
In a mad demoniac struggling.



THE VICTORY.

Ages passed. At last he wearied
 Of his empire and dominion,
And a never lessening hunger
 Gnawed, tormented, and gave battle
To his spirit. Then on pinions
 Of unrest he smote the darkness,
With a fierce titanic motion
 Cleft the silence, swept the spaces
Reaching upward and to eastward.—

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And he listened, caught the echoes
Of the voice of sweet Amora,
Drifting still from amber arches
Where they'd wandered,—calling, pleading,
"Lucifer! alas, Oh, Lucifer!"





THE VICTORY.

Sudden,— sound, as pregnant fragrance,
Roused his calloused sense of pleasure,
And he listened, caught the echoes
Of the voice of Sweet Amora,
Drifting still from amber arches
Where they'd wandered,— calling, pleading,
“Lucifer! alas, oh, Lucifer!
Lost and fallen, Mighty Lucifer!”

(If choice had been, where all were passing fair,
And good and wonderful, and crowned with grace,
It must have named, “Amora”, she to whom
Archangel Lucifer was closest friend,
Companions they, in that most sacred sense
Which mortals may not know,—the bond so fine
And subtle, is but shadowed in their sphere.
It might not be save in that high estate
Where purity and love from stain are free,
In grand endeavor, contemplation chaste,
Had oft their noblest powers conjoined, the joys
Between them shared were doubled, till alas,
Perfidious pride through its o'ermastering lure
Had made him Traitor to his God and her.)

“Lucifer! alas, oh, Lucifer!
Lost and fallen, Mighty Lucifer!”
Still to call of Love he listened,—
For a moment caught a vision
Of transcendent joy surrendered;
Then with shock of startled wonder
Drooped his pinions, for about him
Was the formless Chaos pulsing,
While a Holy Spirit brooded
O'er the waste of shifting shadows.



THE VICTORY.

There, to Eastward, faintly glowing,
Whirling, panting, in the raptures
Of Creation, of Awakening,
Was a shapeless mass of matter
Set in motion by a purpose
Not revealed nor comprehended.
What should be the fateful meaning
Of this strange unlooked for menace?—
None had questioned him as monarch
Of all space outside of Heaven,—
And he asked with imprecations,—
Is another Hell preparing
For another race of rebels?"—



THE VICTORY.

Then he watched with fiendish plotting
 'Gainst the slow evolving marvel,
Watched, and saw the Dismal Nothing
 Which had been, arouse to beauty,
Saw the Smile of the Eternal
 Draw the light from Heaven, and wildered,
Saw the parting of the waters
 And the march of spinning planets.

Well he knew from whence the Power,
 Knew, and owned, though fier^e opposing
Higher Force he could not conquer;
 And again in wild rebellion
Were his curses hurled at Heaven,
 With a vow for the undoing
Of this matchless consummation.—
 “Mine it shall be! with the devils
Of the lowest depths conspiring
 Will I master this new kingdom,
Will I baffle the Eternal!”



THE VICTORY.

From afar he watched, his pinions
Reeking with a venomed vapor
And athrill with prescient wonder.—
Sudden at his side a figure,
Taking shape from mist and shadow,
Veiled and ominous and silent.
“What its portent or its mission?”—
Pulsed an unseen Force in answer,—
“Tis the forecast of transgression
Thrown upon the sentient Future,
Pallid shadow of the Shadow
Which will fall when dire rebellion
Shall have worked its will relentless:
Death, it is,—awaiting summons,
Death, the curse and retribution:
Death, a sleep and mitigation,
Death, the entrance way of promise.”—
With a shudder turned the Traitor,
Hissing forth his maledictions:
“Mine it shall be! with the devils
Of the lowest depths conspiring
Will I master this new kingdom,
Wil! I baffle the Eternal!”



THE VICTORY.

This his threat, the damning mischief,
Which he set him to accomplish,
This the challenge flung,—Incurse
Evil, 'gainst the One All-Holy,
Who, though hearing 'cross the distance
And the darkness which divided,
Heeded not the prideful menace:—
And the while, the Looms Almighty,
Wove the fabric of the Firmament,
And the Earth grew, girt with silence,
Towards her splendor of perfection.



THE VICTORY.

EDEN.

Such time it was when soulless space was dumb,
When striving forces shape nor form had traced,
When yet unconscious chaos held its sway,
And silence brooded o'er the seething waste:
That rose from out the swirling, lurid mass,
Which pulsed in molten waves of quivering might,
A wondrous thing, a sphere set free and whirled
Athwart the shadows of a senseless night.
But One kept watch above the wars of Force;
His will attraction and cohesion lent;
His breath the mighty bubble trembling, felt,
As reeling into space t'was onward sent.

It was not loosed beyond His guardian care,
His breath slow cooled the spinning Sphere—its speed
It checked, its molten liquid chilled until
T'was tamed to feel the yoke His will decreed.
Then granite ribs encased the restless ball,
And humid clouds spread wings for upward flight,
Then sudden, Earth grew conscious of her Lord,
And knew His smile:—that moment there was Light!



THE VICTORY.

Then verdure came, and humble crawling things,
And blossoms quick to try their gladsome life,
And birds to wing the fragrant azure sky,
And fill the upper space with songful strife;
And then a silvery mist, a dewy sheen,
Which wrapped the earth, as in a garment fair,
For her baptismal morn, and over all
A Wondrous Presence; God was everywhere.

And all was good that was, and yet was not
Inscribed by angels on stupendous scroll
Of things created, one which might aspire,—
Among them all was not a living soul.
Then God took counsel with Himself, the while
Slowly length'ning shadows fell, and Silence laid
Her wand on listening hill and vale, and lo!
God spake, and man in His own image made!



THE VICTORY.

He lived, he breathed, a Lord, the earth his own,
The cattle on the hills, the birds in air,
The growth in every vale, the cooling streams
Were all his own, with none to claim nor share—
But soon a deep despair he felt, a deepening need,
A wondering pain, and did not know that from His throne
Was One divined the truth, and pitying spake,
“It is not good that man should dwell alone.”
With yearning soul he gazed in tender wise
Upon the far dim haze at even tide,
Which clung as filmy robe about the hills
And rested on the farther river side.—
Was nowhere to be found some solace sweet,
Some balm for this sad craving in his breast,
“Oh, Lord!” he cried in bitterness and woe,
“Where shall I find surcease from this unrest?
There is a God in Heaven, mayhap fair forms
Of fairest life, but ah, the lonely earth!
My longing cry but rends unanswered skies
Almost I'd curse the day that gave me birth.”



THE VICTORY.

And then he laid him down; a silence fell,
And sleep on him like Death, the thing unborn;
The light of sun went out, the moon was veiled,
A myriad stars were keeping watch till morn.
Low melodies were floating where he slept.
Wind-blown the blossoms spilt their sweets about,
A web of dreams shut out the thoughts of day.
His loneliness, his questioning, his doubt.
At last he waked and cast the slumber thrall
Aside, he lay with lids but half updrawn,
Aweary of the world, his kingdom vast,
Aweary of the light, the roseate dawn.
What were these gifts to him whose lonely heart,
Looked hopeless for some heart to share them all,
What were the whole when dumb eyes only saw,
And lowly beasts but answered to his call.
Then, as he turned, some impulse drew his gaze
To where the lily stalks were swaying slow
Beside a vine-enscreened and shaded bower
But faintly lit by early morning glow.



THE VICTORY.

Amid the lilies tall was something stirred
Which held his restless glance; he gazed, he rose,
He thrilled and caught his breath in sudden pain,
In strange and unknown joy and happy throes.
A something robed in glory like the dawn,
With opalescent hues and shimmering hair,
Ensheathed in dazzling light as bud in leaves,
Of all earth's fairest things it seemed most fair.

Insistent gaze he bent, the vision stayed,
What was this marvel, this divine surprise,
This radiant thing, so like-unlike himself—
He neared—his bosom wrung with eager sighs—
Then lo, as drawn by cords of mystic power,
And swaying as the lilies on their stem,
The one he saw smiled on him as he came,
Sweet silence reigned, all nature watching them.



THE VICTORY.

A hush, and each the other saw, and knew—
A sound went pulsing as of wings above,
Of brooding spirits hovering o'er the two—
The smile of God gave Light—the Woman's, Love.

The Covenant was sealed, 'twixt God and man
Where stood the Tree of Life: the garden fair
A thrill to solemn mandate, throbbing low
Through all the list'ning aisles of fragrant air:

And all was good that was, and sacred calm
On Eden lay, while souls so newly blest
With gifts divine, in all pervading joy,
Together hailed the Holy Day of Rest.



THE VICTORY.

THE TEMPTATION.

Earth was young, its hills and valleys
 In effulgent glory lay,
Throbbing opalescent hazes
 Marked the streamlet's limpid way.—
Flush of rose, of orange, violet,
 Shimmering, shifting, gladsome light,
Swing on high where emerald branches
 Lured new pinions in their flight.
Radiance steeped in scent of blossoms
 Sprung from seeds by Seraphs sown,
Compassed all in grand completion,—
 Life to full perfection grown.—



THE VICTORY.

And with souls attuned to gladness,
Roamed at will the fair domain,
Drank at will from founts of pleasure,
Yet unmixed with grief or pain,
Two who stood in pristine glory,
Human, finite, without wile,
Little lower than the angels,
Man and woman, free from guile.

Like, yet unlike,—he was sterner,
And was stronger, she, 'twould seem,
Finer fabric, frailer fashioned
As the fabric of a dream.—
Adam, Eve, within this Eden,
He, in ravishment of bliss,
Felt his kingship bartered fairly,
For the rapture of her kiss.



THE VICTORY.

But within the tranquil Eden
Crouched a fiend with quenchless hate,
Lucifer, who losing Heaven,
Now was Lord of Hell's estate.
"Hark!" he cried, "to their undoing
Bend I powers of direst woe,
I will curse them with the tortures
Of my foulest Hell below!
Damned they shall be! torn from Eden!
In that dark abode they'll shine
As rare jewels from His kingdom
Set in diadem of mine!"



THE VICTORY.

Dawned there now a fateful morning:
Eve had sought a far retreat.
Where came one disguised in garments
Of the serpent to her feet.—
Sinuous, tortuous, gleaming, glistening.—
As it groveled, coiled and crawled,
Tempting, teasing, trifling, taunting,
Whispering, "Thou, man's slave art called.—
Thou a slave! and yet awaits thee
Dower of rule o'er Earth and Sky,
Dower of wisdom, of transcendent
Joys to bless thee ceaselessly.
Why shouldst thou delay in bondage,
See, the fruit haugs luscious, round,
Pluck and eat, oh blinded Mortal,
Here the gift of gods is found!"



THE VICTORY.

Then the woman, though, "Thou shalt not!"
 Through her conscious soul again
Flashed in warning, scorned the mandate
 With a look of proud disdain;
And the while, she thought in fondness
 Of her lord,—her loving care
Would have him of gift so wondrous
 Take with her an equal share.
So the fruit she gathered, smiling,
 Hastening then on eager feet,
Knowing not there lurked a poison
 In its heart so deadly sweet.



THE VICTORY.

When they both the fruit had tasted,
 Sudden age o'er radiant youth
Came with dire confusion, sorrow,
 And too late the bitter truth.
Now they hastened, shrinking, weeping,
 To a desolate retreat,
All in terror, lest in Eden
 Some avenger, they should meet.

Then with wild and fiendish laughing,
 Cried the Tempter, "Go your way,
Crawling in the serpent's garments
 I, the Prince of Hell, did play.
Eve, to Lucifer, hath bartered
 Gift the Lord of Heaven gave,
She may now be Queen of Devils
 Or in Eden Adam's Slave!"



THE VICTORY.

THE PROMISE.

The gates of Eden closed and o'er them paled
 The new born sun in shame,
While nearer swung in swift and deadly curves
 A gleaming sword of flame.

Beyond, where stretched a silent, sombre, land
 Where thorns and thistles grew,
They passed,—the man,—the woman,—who had sinned,
 To fate they neither knew.

The woman listened, shuddered,—“Still I hear
 The Tempter’s taunt!” she cried,
“A cruel, jeering, mocking laugh, which sounds
 Forever at my side;”



THE VICTORY.

But he heard not,—his duller senses stirred
To pains of heat and cold,
While finer fibre of her being thrilled
To keener pangs untold.

She backward turned bewildered, longing, gaze,
But then upon the man
She smiled, to win a smile from him, and thus
New happiness began:

For with a sudden wistful grace she gave
Unsought, a warm caress,
Against his own she pressed her throbbing heart,
As with its balm to bless.



THE VICTORY.

“Oh might we not perchance, just thou and I,
 Make Paradise,” she cried,
“I care not for the fragrant bowers of ease,
 If thou art by my side;

What though the sun shine not, and bitter winds
 Through all this dreary space
Should buffet us, my heart will find its light
 And solace in thy face.

Had now the Angel ruthless, driven us thence
 Each on his lonely way,
It had in truth been fate of direst woe,—
 Together, sure we may



THE VICTORY.

Not deem ourselves of every blessing reft."—
 But heeding not her kiss,
Her pressure close, despair dragged down his soul
 To fathomless abyss.

He gave no answer, though she set her lips
 In pleading once again
Upon his own, the while with stifled cry
 She hid her grief, and then

They wearily and slowly fared them on:
 But in her tender care
To comfort him and cheer, her soul was roused,
 And thus was born a prayer;—



THE VICTORY.

And even while she prayed an answer came,
A parting of the green
Half stunted growth that drooped on every hand,
And one who framed between

The slender stalks, enrobed in vapors grey,
In silence gently came
And touched her as in comradeship and love,
With look nor word of blame.

A Presence 'twas, not lovely but with power
To quicken life, to start
A glad expectancy which wakened Hope
Within the woman's heart.



THE VICTORY.

With gracious guidance then it quickly led
To grateful task, and bound
The seared grass, which flamed neath mystic touch
Till light and heat were found.

At this the man was moved to share the toil,
He rose in conscious pride
Of strength to shield the helpmeet who had walked
Unmurmuring at his side.

In eager haste he bent to lift her load,
And sudden felt the thrill
Of passion, pure and high, of love exalted,
All his being fill.



THE VICTORY.

'Twas thus that service sweetest bliss revealed,
 And Eve in gladness turned
To ask, "Oh! Spirit, whence art thou, and what
 Thy name! from thee we've learned

That life may yet some compensation know,
 That Hope and Joy abide
With thee,"—The Stranger paused, then answer gave.—
 "To be thy faithful guide,

I came; on that dark day when Paradise
 Was rent with human cries
Of penitence and fear, was I ordained
 To cheer, to help thee rise



THE VICTORY.

To marvelous and most transcendent destiny,
Which yet may be achieved
Through Infinite forgiveness and the love
Of Him whom thou hast grieved.

My name in ancient Seraph tongue is "Love,"
But "Duty," it may be,
Or "Labor," "Service," in your harsher speech
Translated wrongfully:

And that I teach, in some mysterious way,
Is part of Heaven's plan
By which may be restored the gift he lost,—
His happiness, to man."—



THE VICTORY.

A silence,—and the twain once more alone,
 In solemn wonder bowed,—
Their souls as with a sudden conscious power,
 And purpose high, endowed.—

And now the Exile's Land to beauty grew,
 The desert slowly bloomed
To roseate splendor, and rejoicing suns
 Which once in anger gloomed,

Smiled down in gladness; and as Adam toiled,
 In fields where thorns were rife,
Burst forth with fragrance, bud and leaf and flower
 To most abundant life.—



THE VICTORY.

And Eve, the sharer of the sin and shame,
Was now to rapture stirred,
For lo, the accents of a little child
The Earth in wonder heard:

And clasped as gift within its hand so small
The mother found a balm
Which soothed her heart and tuned her tender lips
To sweet and praiseful psalm.—

But even yet she seemed to hear the cry
Of one who swiftly flew,—
Of Lucifer, who cleft the lurid skies,—
And in her heart she knew



THE VICTORY.

The Serpent's lure was still about her path,
And trembling, oft she prayed
Her sin might be forgiven, the penalty
Of disobedience paid.—

Whilst musing thus, the child asleep upon
Her breast, she heard it said,
As in a vision, "Peace, the woman's Seed
Shall bruise the Serpent's head."



THE VICTORY.

PREDESTINED.

Athwart high heaven flashed out the new born stars,
 A myriad fragments of transcendent joy,
A myriad thoughts from Him who traced afar
 Their courses by Omnipotent design,
Unnumbered hosts whirled upward on their way,
 Orion proud, Areturus still and calm,
The Pleiades, but half their glittering globes
 Revealed across the sentient, sapphire dome;
While round and round, the Sovereign Orb of night
 Swung as a mighty circling pendulum;—
A ryhthm pulsing through the vibrant space
 Roused all creation to mellifluous chords,
To one vast harmony in which the Spheres
 And all the Sons of God were joined in song.



THE VICTORY.

Above, below, the world was wondrous fair,
A million shifting shades of beauty thrilled
Through amethyst and sardonyx and pearl,
A-tremble o'er the firmament's deep blue;
And there, removed, hung one resplendent Star,
An exile from each Constellation's zone.
So distant placed that only Seraphim
In farthest flight its radiant realm could reach.
The Solitary Star made constant plaint,
"I am not held as meet for service high,
Jehovah charges that I stand and wait."
Then eons passed,—again to echoing dome
Came pinions of the Seraphim where still
The Star in conscious isolation swung.



THE VICTORY.

“Thine hour hath come!” they sang, “go lead the way,
Three travelers pray for light, and all the world
Shall follow when they find the Lord’s Anointed!”—
Then as an oriflamme, the Star flashed down
With wave on wave of winged Hosts to bear
It company; and sudden blazed to Pilgrim eyes
So great a light that wild with joy they cried,
“We’ve seen within the East His Star!”—and lo
The Star stood still o’er humble manger bed
Where lay a Child!—Now chanting Cherubim
Broke forth in song celestial, while the Light
Expanded, and the Star, Beatified,
As iridescent nimbs round His Head
With rapture burst to countless rays and died.



THE VICTORY.

THE VIRGIN.

With visions girt, upon the path she stands
Which leads above to rugged mountain's height,
And down to fragrant vernal vales below,
Where stretch the glowing gardens of Delight.
So young, so pure, with eager, wondering eyes,
And lips attuned to anthems sweet she waits:
"Oh who shall lead the way?" she cries, "and show
The path, and who shall open wide the gates
That I may safely enter on the Land
Of my desire: Oh throbbing heart be still,
Be still, lest you should drown the Seraph's Song
And with the sounds of Earth my senses fill;
Oh let them hold my hand and lead me slow,
To Consecration's Heights where I would go."



Oh, let them hold my hand and lead me slow
To Consecration's Heights where I would go.



THE VICTORY.

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN.

Child of mystery supernal,
Slumbering on Thy mother's breast,
What the dreams Thy silken lashes
Shut from her too eager quest?
Are they visions of Thy kingdom,
Of Archangels near the throne,
Of the sins of all the nations
And of One who will atone?

Child of mystery supernal,
Closer nestle 'gainst my breast
What portends I may not fathom,
Only bow to God's behest.



THE VICTORY.

Child of prophecy and longing,
 Of slow ages of desire,
Of whom darkly spake the sages,
 Of whom sang the heavenly choir.
What Thy mission, how accomplished,
 Through what suffering, through what woe,
What the sword my heart to enter,
 What the path that Thou must know?

Child of mystery supernal,
 'Gainst my heart in trustful rest,
Sure 'tis more than human loving
 Thrills Thy virgin mother's breast.



Child of prophecy and longing.
Of slow ages of desire.





THE VICTORY.

Comes a shadow to Thy forehead,
Little One? Thy mother's fears
May have cast a prescient glooming—
In her eyes are unshed tears;
For, slow-gathering clouds of sorrow
Shut away the rising sun,
Darkling round Thy Virgin mother
Whilst Thou'rt sleeping, Little One.



THE VICTORY.

But sleep on, sleep on, enfolded
In my loving human arms,
Child of mystery supernal,
Sheltered thus from earth's alarms.
Frail this cordon 'gainst the evils
Which may throng Thy upward way,—
Closer, closer I enfold Thee,
Thon art mine at least to-day.

Hark, a step outside the portal!
List, rude voices passing by!
Sleep, for Israel's God is watching,
In his keeping Thon and I.
Child of mystery unfathomed!
Slumbering babe upon my breast,
Through deep agony of loving
I would do the Lord's behest.



Through deep agony of loving
I would do the Lord's behest.



THE VICTORY.

ATONEMENT.

Yes, I am His mother.

They've brought me the thorns
That tortured His brow,—

Merciless, cruel, relentless,—
Bewildering and deafening,

The scoffing and railing
Resound even now
From lips of the pitiless rabble.

Yes, give me the thorns,—

For I am His mother.
And here was His resting place,—

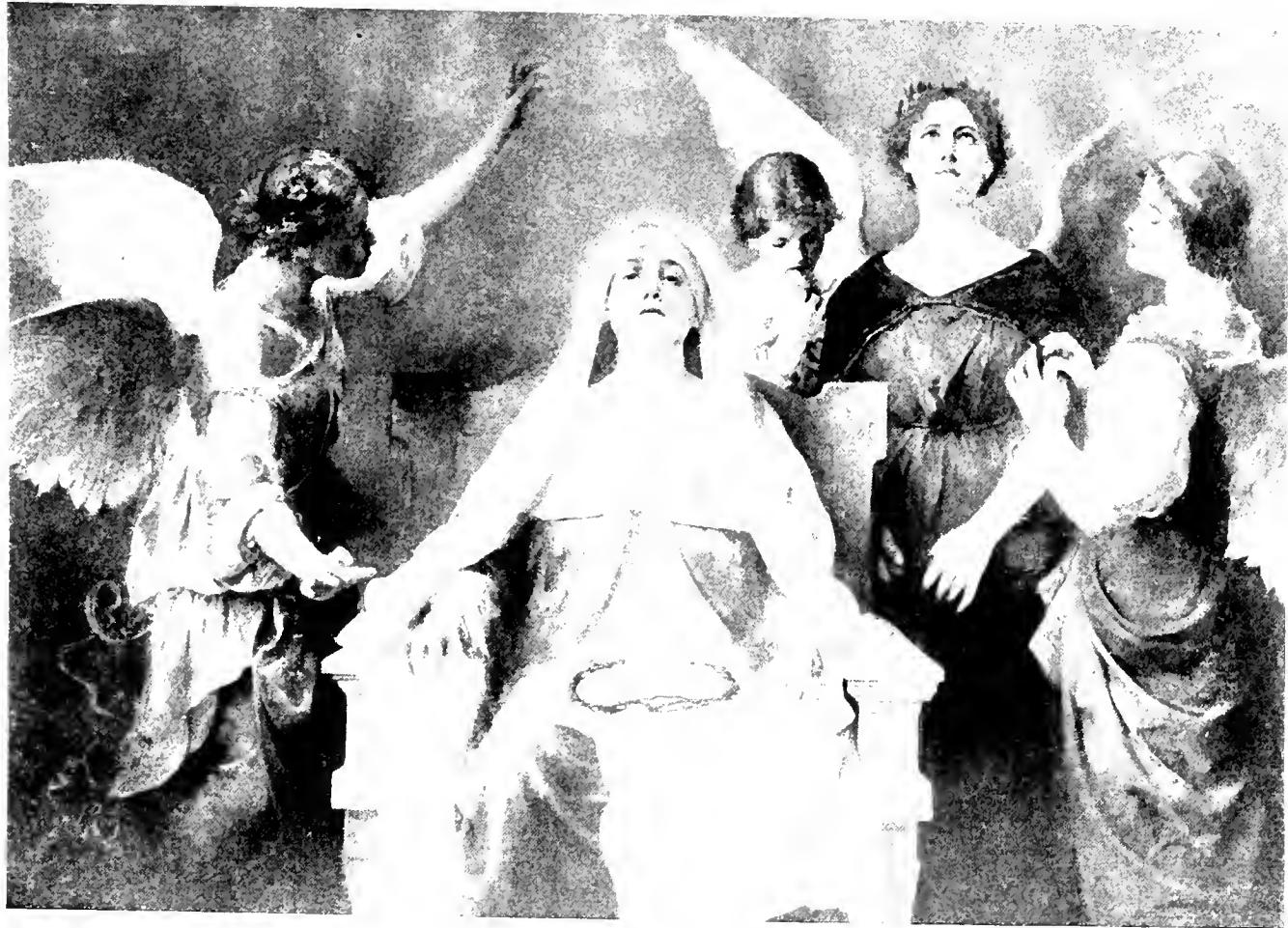
Never was cradled another
'Gainst bosom so tender,—

The while in deep rapture
I gazed on His face
And silently, reverently, pondered.



THE VICTORY.

That agonized hour
When redeeming a world,
He looked upon me,
Took pity on her who had borne Him,
And let the mad throng
That jeered and derided
Their Savior, see
His compassionate love for His mother.



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Yes, I am His mother,
They've brought me the thorns
That tortured His Brow.



THE VICTORY.

I will stifle my sobs,
And crush back the human,
The woman, the cry
Of the mother who bore Him;—
I'll be dumb and submissive,—
The handmaid of Heaven,—
Forsooth, who am I,
That Jehovah should vouchsafe to honor?—

Oh,—be silent, my heart,—
For the tomb,—can it frustrate
His purpose?—or lo,
Can He, the Omnipotent, fail?—
Be silent,—a marvel
Approaches completion,—
Be silent, and know
That the power of the Lord shall prevail.



THE VICTORY.

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.

In farther space it hung: nor Hell nor Heaven
 Nor yet the Earth was near. The Sun sent not
A quickening ray, nor gave the gentler Moon
 Of her munificence unto its need.
Chilled to silence 'twas, and dead monotony,
 With darkness swathing close as 'twere a garment,
And cold grey mists afloat, encircling round
 As sluggish smoke from embers dying slow,—
This the Nether-World, the place of them
 That some have called "The Damned," reckoning not
What larger mercy poor rebellious souls
 May find with God than with their fellow man.



THE VICTORY.

This, that Other-place, the Prison-House
For such as fared them from the world sin-sick
And miserable; bars impalpable but potent
Held them in; by spirit limitations
Were they bound, for as a zone about
The Place pulsed ether, fine and pure and rare
They could not breathe without extinction and
Annihilation, because of throttling sin,
The dread disease which made them what they were.



THE VICTORY.

Ages many passed: the Prison-House,
Was thronged. Stained with blood, with lust, with greed,
With hate, with all the crimes Hell-hatched for man's
Undoing, had they come, and waited, hungered,
For a good they could not name.—Might Hope
Survive in this drear Shadow-Land of Death?—

Away, upward and to Eastward loomed
A radianee, fitful, fluctuant, which shone
Such time as passed a throng of Blessed through
The Jacinth Gates; 'twas then flashed forth a beam
Which touched to feeble glow e'en this forlorn
Abode of barrenness and arid waste.
There was no other light but from one Star
Which deigned its ray to share with this sad sphere
Whose fires of life had long ago burnt out.



THE VICTORY.

This star was steady, strong and changeless in
 Its power though distant, it had hung serene
Since Firmament of molten sapphire bent
 To His first touch; and to this orb had clung
The whole of feeble hope the Hopeless knew,
 “What should it show?” they asked, “but that He held
Some purpose which through ages long might work
 And make them not too low for meed of grace,
For something possible to God though not
 To man; and one there was who pleaded sore
With ceaseless cry that they should ceaseless hope,
 And loose not hold of slender thread which lie
With agonizing fear sometime scarce saved
 Against a damning doubt.



THE VICTORY.

This aged Seer
Had once been first among the sons of God,
 Had listened to the voice of God himself,
But yet been first in sin, as first in life
 And then gone forth from Paradise to woe,
To retribution; and now it would appear
 That faint elusive memories enwrapt
His soul which oft in whispered chant broke forth
 And drew the Hopeless till they thronged him 'round
Athirst for hope. "The Seed of her!" he cried,
 While throes of recollection broke the words,
"The Seed of her, the woman, source of all
 That are. It shall bruise the Serpent's head,
And though it doth not yet appear what we
 Shall be, there'll come for all the Nations balm,
For even those of this Dead Sphere, and there
 Shall come for those that sit in darkness drear
So great a Light that It will lighten all
 The vast and boundless universe of souls!"—



THE VICTORY.

A few there were who long had held this hope,
They dwelt somewhat apart, enwrapt in calm,
Removed from heaviest gloom which girt the Place;
But to the greater throng imprisoned close
There seemed no hope, no peace, nor greater ill,
Till sudden, to the desolate estate
They deemed at worst, came such a direful change
That cries of hoarse despair stirred all the space
To vibrant misery; for while they watched,
The Star, their light, from out the heavens fell,
And deeper darkness, such as might be felt
Close gathered round them. Alas, how driven or filched
From distant skies they could not tell, nor whether
Drawn to give its light to some whose plight
Was sadder still than theirs: they only felt
That to abyss of woe not dreamed nor known
They now were plunged in cold and rayless night.—
"Twas not divined the Solitary Star
Had mission save to them, nor that its light
Predestined from the first, had shone afar,
And drawn three watchful Seers with eager hopes
In search of ONE so heralded. Nor could
They know that with most rapturous throes of joy
The orb was riven, and gave perfected life
An emblem of the ONE to whom it led.



THE VICTORY.

The while this sore distress, there came from depths
Below, where Demons dwelt, a host that crowded
Round the Prison-House and railed, with oaths
Tormenting. “ ‘Tis not long till you shall join
With us!” they cried, “with us, with Lucifer!
With him who’ll bind you on the wheels of fire
Which spin and whirl in molten seas of flame,
Where deathless serpents sting, and choking fumes
Of poison stifle to the final death!”



THE VICTORY.

So tortured, in a maddening fear they groped,
How long a space they might not ask nor know,
But sudden, came a thrill along celestial
Ways, the air was palpitant and all
Aglow; the radiance upward, Eastward, grew,
And Heralds were abroad, and Seraphim
And Cherubim, and Angels, and Archangels
Thronged all space grown luminous and white!
Then, with resurrected memories strong
That quickened to repentance, cried the hosts
Of Souls in Prison, "Lord! Oh Lord! how long
Wilt Thou forget us!" Then the nearer air
Throbbed and pulsed and was alive to song,
And then the veil suspended 'twixt the worlds,
From Heaven to Hell, was rent by touch Divine,
And with its parting, flood of light upon them
Shone in fullness, and that moment, One
Appeared, whom, looking on, they could but know
Was Lord, both of Living and of Dead.



THE VICTORY.

His supereminent glory filled the Place;
 His strength,—which theirs might be,—His righteousness,
With His perfection and sufficiency,—theirs;
 For e'en to them had come, as to the Earth,
To every Planet, to remotest parts
 Of wide Creation, a Redemption free:
And listening, could be heard a Voice which asked,
 “Shall Man or Devil strive 'gainst God and win?—
This may not be. The Victory over Death,
 O'er Hell, is His, and all terrestrial things
Are now restored to kinship with their Lord:
 And this sad Sphere, this Prison-House, redeemed,



And Chernbim, and Angels, and Archangels
Thronged all space grown luminous and white.





THE VICTORY.

Shall be for waiting set, 'twixt Earth and Heaven,
And here shall Many Mansions be, and all
The souls of just men here be perfect made:
For some, not fit as yet for highest joys,
Some maimed and blind with sin, who yet have kept
A leaven small of faith, there shall be hope:
And this New Paradise, a Garden-Place
For souls yet held in God's wide providence.''

Then solemn joy and calm encompassed those
Who with repentance heard, and song of praise,
"All blessing, glory, honor, power," they sang,
"To Him with whom this glad salvation comes,
To Him who through the envious Gates of Death
Hath brought to every soul the Gift of Life!"—



THE VICTORY.

Awhile He tarried, then beyond the veil
Was lost to view, and where had hung the Star
Now swept a Bow which spanned the azure dome,
With beryl set, and pearl and chrysoprase,
And Sardius, and agate and the glow
Of rubies: and in token was it given
That now was bridged the gulf aforetime fixed,
That on this path of glory He had gone
And they might follow when fruition came
To vast design discerned by Him alone.



THE VICTORY.

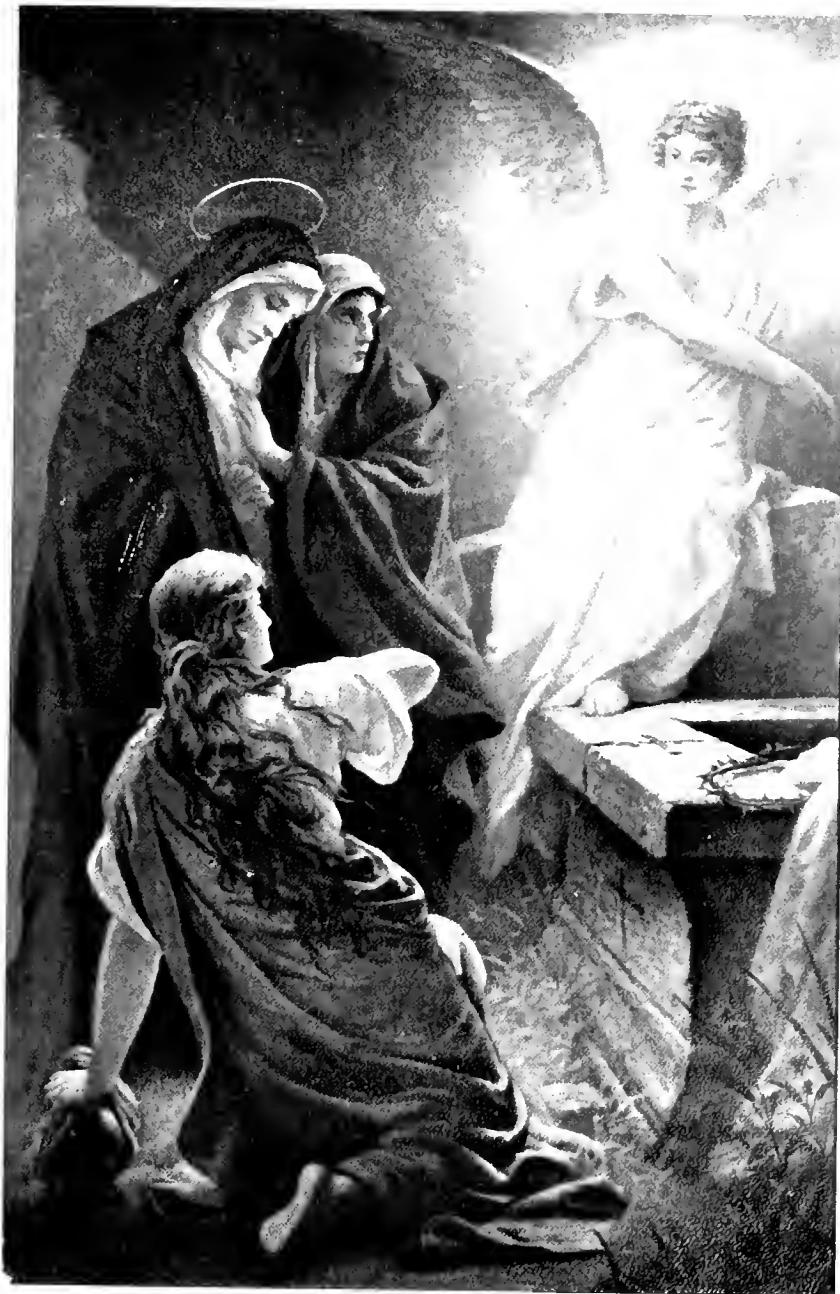
This Bow of Hope pales not. The Vision grows
To hearts that apprehend: and still the songs
Of Souls in Paradise resound with praise,
And all the sons of God above, below,
May lift their voices in a rapturous joy,
For blessing, power, remain with Him whose light
Has lightened and may not be circumscribed,
Whose dominance has swept from Chaos to
Completion of transcendent plan, who God
Almighty is, and was, and is to be!



THE VICTORY.

TO PARADISE.

It is not some far voyage cross the seas,
 Where sullen waves in angry billows beat,
And low descending clouds in phalanx hold
 Flash out their menace as they wrathful meet.
It is not travel o'er the arid plains
 Where scorching glare and burning winds unite,
It is not weary struggling up the path
 To dim and distant frozen mountain height.—
Ah, no, 'tis sudden freedom,—and the sound
 Of song exultant and of sinless mirth,—
A swift ecstatic vision of delight,—
 Escape from galling manacles of earth.—
The Lord's dear promise shows how short the way,—
 “IN PARADISE,—thou'l be with ME TO-DAY.”



He is not here, but risen! go and see
How Death is swallowed up in Victory!





THE VICTORY.

THE VICTORY.

The sentient breath of newly blooming buds
Was rife upon the breeze of early morn,
A conscious wonder filled the awesome space
As had some mystic marvel, newly born
To Earth, just passed the vernal arches through
And left the trailing glory of its tread.
An empty sepulcher in dim surprise
Awaits, here had lain the Mighty Dead,
And nearer was the stone the Scoffers rolled
With blasphemy which Heaven itself defied.—
But He!—the bonds were broken, tenantless
The Place, and lo, rejoicing Seraphs cried,
“He is not here, but risen! go and see
How Death is swallowed up in Victory!”



THE VICTORY.

THE ASCENSION.

A morning glowed in heart of Heaven's Summer,
 As jewel, on a jeweled crystal sea,
So still and sweet and calm, expectant, tender,
 As wrapped in hushed adoring ecstasy:
And then a wave of incense, iridescent,
 And palpitant and fragrant, blessed the air,
While from rejoicing throngs of Earth, ascending,
 Came silvern mists of pulsing praise and prayer.
The Host Angelic waited.—sudden parted,
 Between, appeared a glistening pathway lined
With Radiant Ones, and upward, farther, leading
 To heights where most transcendent glory shined,
Where veil of rainbow woof and warp descended
 Lest e'en the Seraph's eyes its light should blind.



THE VICTORY.

Then softly, from afar, came faintest fluting,
As might be humblest songster's matin lay,
Then deep and deeper tones, the diapason
Of perfect strains upon mellifluous way.
The winds of Earth arose and smote the waters
To resonance of vibrant melody,
And hills replied in rhythmic, dulcet echoes
Till all of nature swelled the symphony.
Then Seraphim, with quivering harps and cymbals
Gave voice to song of Ransomed and Redeemed,
Of Heaven and Earth now reconciled and blending,
And of Emmanuel, by the Prophets dreamed.—
Then came THE VICTOR,—Gates to earthward rending,—
Whence fullest glory of the GOD-HEAD streamed.



THE VICTORY.

COMPLETION.

FROM CHAOS TO COMPLETION,—HEAVEN TO HEAVEN,
AGAIN THE CHAIN OF CHANGELESS LOVE WAS SWUNG
ABOUT REVOLVING SPHERES AND CIRCLING SUNS,
WITH GOD THE CENTRE OF THE GLORIOUS WHOLE.



The sentient breath of newly blooming buds
Was ripe upon the breeze of early morn.

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